

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 276684

FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

FOLLOWING REPEAT RANGOON 3722 ACTION SECSTATE INFO DEA HQS
BANGKOK CHIANG MAI 9 NOV QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 3722

DEA HQS PASS BENSINGER, EN/CASEY, IG/FINK, ST/GUUN
BANGKOK AND CHIANG MAI PASS DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJ: DEA VISIT -- MEETING WITH GUB OFFICIALS

1. SUMMARY: DEA AND MISSION OFFICERS, IN NOVEMBER 4
MEETING WITH GUB NARCOTICS OFFICIALS, REVIEWED CURRENT
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS SCENE, UPDATED INFORMATION ON
OPERATION MACE, REQUESTED SAMPLES FOR THE SIGNATURE
PROGRAM AND INQUIRED AGAIN ABOUT UTILIZATION OF U.S.-SUPPLIED
EQUIPMENT OTHER THAN HELICOPTERS. THE BURMESE WERE OPTI-
MISTIC ABOUT MACE, AND SAID THEY WOULD REQUEST HIGHER-LEVEL
APPROVAL FOR IT AND FOR THE PROVISION OF SAMPLES. THEY
SAID THE REQUESTED INFORMATION ON USE OF EQUIPMENT WAS
BEING PREPARED. THE BURMESE WERE NON-COMMITTAL ON THE
SUBJECT OF THE F-27. THEY TOLD OF THE SEIZURE NOVEMBER 3
OF 600 POUNDS OF OPIUM FROM A CARAVAN AND EXPRESSED
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SATISFACTION WITH THE RECENT PROVISION OF T-33 SPARE

PARTS NEEDED TO GIVE THE BURMESE AN AIRSTRIKE CAPABILITY FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS. FOLLOWING THE MEETING THEY SHOWED A WELL-MADE NEWSREEL MOVIE ABOUT LAST SPRING'S SUCCESSFUL OPERATION AGAINST REFINERIES IN THE LAO LO CHAI AREA. END SUMMARY.

2. DEA REGION 16 DIRECTOR ADDARIO, LABORATORY DIRECTOR SOBOL, CHIANG MAI SAIC GUTENSOHN, AND RANGOON NARCOTICS COORDINATOR BULLINGTON MET NOVEMBER 4 WITH PEOPLE'S POLICE FORCE DIRECTOR GENERAL U SHWE THAN, DEFENSE SERVICES INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR COL. MYO AUNG, CUSTOMS SERVICE DIRECTOR GENERAL COTEM AUNG HTAY, BAF CHIEF OF TECHNICAL SERVICES COL. MAUNG MAUNG SHIN AND AIDES. AS USUAL THE ATMOSPHERE WAS BUSINESSLIKE AND FRIENDLY.

3. FOLLOWING ARE THE PRINCIPAL MATTERS COVERED:

A. ADDARIO GAVE A BRIEF TOUR D'HORIZON OF THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS SCENE, STRESSING THE INCREASING ATTENTION WHICH IS ALREADY BEING FOCUSED ON SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE ANTICIPATED FURTHER ATTENTION WHICH WILL BE DIRECTED TOWARD THIS AREA WITH THE HOPED FOR MAJOR CURTAILMENT OF MEXICAN SUPPLIES SEVERAL MONTHS FROM NOW. HE ALSO NOTED THE HIGH PRIORITY BEING PLACED ON NARCOTICS CONTROL BY THE NEW THAI GOVERNMENT. U SHWE THAN RESPONDED BY REITERATING THAT NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION IS A FIRMLY ESTABLISHED, HIGH PRIORITY GUB POLICY WHICH IS BEING IMPLEMENTED THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS.

B. GUTENSOHN PRESENTED UPDATED INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSED OPERATION MACE, AND STATED THAT THE RELEVANT TECHNICAL APPARATUS WOULD BE IN PLACE WITHIN THREE WEEKS. THE BURMESE SIDE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST AND ALTHOUGH THEY COULD MAKE NO COMMITMENT UNTIL HIGHER-LEVEL APPROVAL IS RECEIVED, SAID THAT THEY APPRECIATED THE NEED FOR PROMPT ACTION AND THAT APPROVAL WOULD PROBABLY BE GRANTED.

C. SOBOL DESCRIBED THE DEA SIGNATURE PROGRAM AND ASKED FOR NARCOTICS SAMPLES FROM GUB SEIZURES IN ORDER TO FURTHER RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. U SHWE THAN SAID HE WOULD PRESENT THIS REQUEST FOR HIGHER LEVEL APPROVAL. CONFIDENTIAL

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D. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION, U SHWE THAN SAID, "WE DON'T EVEN HAVE AN EDUCATED GUESS" AS TO THE AMOUNT OF OPIUM PRODUCECD IN BURMA.

E. COL. AUNG HYAY NOTED THE NEED FOR AN AIRSTRIKE CAPABILITY FOR OPERATIONS UCH AS MACE AND THOSE RECENTLY CONDUCTED AGAINST CARAVANS, AND STRESSED THE NEED FOR TIMELY SPARE PARTS SUPPLIES FOR THE BAF T-33'S. (THESE U.S.-PRODUCED AIRCRAFT PROVIDE THE BAF'S ONLY SIGNIFICANT

AIRSTRIKE CAPABILITY, AND THEY HAVE BEEN GROUNDED FOR OVER A YEAR PENDING RECEIPT OF SPARE PARTS.) COL. MAUNG MAUNG SHIN SAID THAT THE NECESSARY PARTS (DELIVERY OF WHICH WAS EXPDITED BY THE MISSION) HAVE BEEN PICKED UP IN SINGAPORE BY A BURMESE VESSEL AND ARE DUE IN RANGOON ON NOVEMBER 10. THE T-33'S SHOULD BE OPERATIONALNWITHIN A WEEK OR SO OF THE SPARE PARTS' ARRIVAL, HE SAID.

F. BULLINGTON REMINDED U SHWE THAN OF OUR EARLIER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE UTILIZATION OF NIGHT VISION DEVICES AND THE COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED UNDER THE NARCOTICS CONTROL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. U SHWE THAN SAID THAT HE HAD REFERRED THIS MATTER TO THE APPROPRIATE TECHNICAL AUTHORITIES AND EXPECTED TO HAVE A RESPONSE BEFORE LONG.

G. BULLINGTON AGAIN EMPHASIZED OUR WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST WITH SPARE PARTS FOR THE F-27 AS SOON AS WE RECEIVE A GUB REQUEST. U SHWE THAN WAS NON-COMMITTAL. HE ALSO MADE NO SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO A QUERY ABOUT THE REQUESTED APPROVAL FOR RUDY HALL TO VISIT RANGOON IN CONNECTION WITH THE F-27.

H. COL. MYO AUNG COMMENTED THAT ON NOVEMBER 3 THE BURMA ARMY HAD SUCCESSFULLY ATTACKED A 40-MULE OPIUM CARAVAN NORTHWEST OF KENG TUNG AND SEIZED APPROXIMATELY 600 POUNDS OF OPIUM.

I. FOLLOWING THE MEETING, THE BURMESE SHOWED A NEWSREEL-TYPE MOVIE OF LAST APRIL'S HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CAYENNE OPERATION IN THE LAO LO CHAI AREA. IT WAS AN INTERESTING AND WELL-MADE MOVIE WHICH ILLUSTRATES THE COMPLEXITIES OF MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST SHAN STATE REFINERIES AND DEPICTS THE ROLE OF THE U.S.-PROVIDED HELICOPTERS. U SHWE THAN SAID IT WOULD SOON BE RELEASED FOR SHOWING IN MOVIE THEATERS THROUGHOUT BURMA, AND IN CONFIDENTIAL

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RESPONSE TO OUR QUERY SAID THAT HE THOUGH A COPY COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO US TO MAKE PRINTS, THOUGH THIS WOULD REQUIRE HIGHER-LEVEL APPROVAL. OSBORN UNQTE. KISSINGER

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